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AUTHOR Fugate, Liz
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ABSTRACT

This paper details a step-by-step process for documenting university and college theatre history through the accession and preservation of materials. It offers advice for collecting materials; locating collections; handling materials; using R. Berner's "Manual for Accessing, Arrangement, and Description of Manuscripts and Archives"; retaining materials; identifying techniques in iconography; treating materials; storing methods to preserve materials; dealing with temperature and humidity; mounting scrapbooks and photographs; and using deacidification methods and advancements. The paper concludes with (1) a list of locations within the University of Washington for theatre research and (2) selected bibliographies on accessions and handling of theatre materials and the preservation of materials. (HOD)

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Liz Fugate

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DEVELOPING A TRADITION: DOCUMENTING UNIVERSITY & COLLEGE THEATRE HISTORY

ACCESSING AND PRESERVING MATERIALS

(Slides and preservation supplies were used to illustrate this talk)

METHODS OF COLLECTING MATERIALS

Traditional methods of collecting materials include: estate sales, friends, retiring faculty, people who are moving, and budgeted purchases.

LOCATIONS OF COLLECTIONS

Standard locations where research material is found include: libraries and departmental collections.

Within a library, collections may exist in the following locations: manuscripts, photography, rare books, and regional collections.

Local and state historical societies have very good information especially on preservation of materials.

METHODS OF HANDLING MATERIAL

Methods of handling material vary as to the amount of sophistication you have or want and the amount of time and staff available.

You can do a very simple indexing which is manual or computer generated. You can use the standard cataloging procedures which libraries use, but these offer a limited approach to items such as props and drops. Technical theatre materials need to be handled in a more specialized manner than the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules allow.

BERNER'S BOOK

Richard Berner's book (MANUAL FOR ACCESSING, ARRANGEMENT, AND DESCRIPTION OF MANUSCRIPTS AND ARCHIVES) offers a description of how to set up a collection; he also offers a means of detailed indexing of materials. His book offers different formats on initially recording the item as well as various worksheets involved in describing the material. He begins with a pre-accession log; later he discusses the worksheet and mentions the methods of processing materials. He suggests that levels of detail be determined by the estimated amount of use the item will have.

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(Begin slides taken from Berner's book)

Berner's method provides information on size of the collection and the location of material on the shelf. His method allows for materials to be handled as accessed so the collection does not need to be shifted when simular material is incorporated.

Information is given on the donor's restrictions imposed on the collection. Be careful of possible violations of copyright when accessing a collection.

Biographical/historical features allow for a short paragraph on the person or organization.

Major correspondence is listed and cross-indexed under a name index. Hence you can go to the name index and find any relevant information or correspondence on an individual.

The name index lists significant people who appear in various collections.

Subject approach can be unlimited or limited depending on the amount of use you expect.

Here you see the parent organization which is the School of Drama. Within that division you have sub-groups which can be divided into even smaller sub-groups. By following Berner's method you can use the indexes and locate information on the School of Drama, which appears in over thirty-four boxes. You can locate items in such a specific manner that you can go to box number twelve, file folder number two, file number seven.

The data sheet provides information on the major subject and people involved. A data sheet is established on each accession as it arrives.

The inventory sheet provides location information on where the material is shelved and what appears in each box. The inventory sheet on this one accession runs over twenty pages.

The subject index lists any file which has information on the School of Drama. Information from the Comptroller's Office, which is on the School of Drama, appears in the subject index. To locate where the information is shelved, you then go to the Comptroller's inventory. The inventory identifies which box has the information needed.

The chronological index lists the order in which the files arrived.

RETENTION OF MATERIALS

At the University of Washington materials can be located in the Manuscripts area, the Records Center, or Archives. Manuscripts handles personal papers of people not associated with the University. The Records Center handles transcient papers. University related materials, which are retained indefinitely, are housed in Archives.

The School of Drama has the option of locating materials at the School of Drama or at Records. Significant materials are housed in Archives.

This is the retention schedule for the School of Drama. It provides information on who has the official copy, who has a duplicate copy and how long that copy is retained. As space becomes a factor in retention policy you will see retention schedules adjusted and older material, which is less significant, may be withdrawn.

Two considerations for a theatre department concerned with retention of materials are microfilming and computers. These are two way to store a lot of material in very little space.

It is not always wise to keep an original. You need to decide whether the original is more important than the information on it. Rare books collections are concerned with keeping the original in its pristine state; your concerns may be easy access to the information.

IDENTIFICATION TECHNIQUES IN ICONOGRAPHY

Whenever possible get the donor to identify persons who appear in photographs or scrapbooks.

With the aid of existing programs, Dan Harrington, a retired faculty member, is currently going through the scrapbooks and photographs and identifying personnel involved with the productions. At the University we are fortunate to have only one production program missing. However because the Archives is collecting materials from so many retiring faculty members it is possible it may appear among the papers of a non-drama faculty member.

TREATMENT OF MATERIALS

When a collection of manuscripts arrives you should retain the original order until you determine how you wish to handle access.

Materials should be checked as to their physical state. General cleaning of the objects may be necessary. Remove stables, rubber bands and paper clips. If you are dealing with curled objects, you may need to unroll them, place them on a flat surface, and weight them down.

As you can see older paper ages first on any folds or creases. As paper yellows it is most likely to tear along the folds, edges or the margins.

If you are dealing with floorplans or designs that have been folded you are going to have a design that is unusable. If you must fold items, try a fold like this because it does not crease the paper. Although you cannot store as many items in a box when you use this type of fold, the material will last longer.

If you must staple items use non-corrosive staples and place them diagonally in the corner.

If paper clips are used for heavy-use items use plastic paper clips.

Use acid-free folders and boxes whenever possible. Between each photograph or design you should have a sheet of acid-free paper.

Acid-free boxes come in varying sizes; it is possible to purchase boxes which allow for your designs to be stored in a flat position.

If you prefer to label your boxes try a stamp or a xerox on acid free paper then apply the label with yes paste, which can be purchased from an artist shop. Self-adhesive labels have a tendency to peel off or gray and become difficult to read.

Because many people are not aware of what acid-free paper looks like, you should store this paper in a drawer. Otherwise someone may be using the more expensive acid-free paper for doodling.

When placing your files into a box like this, try to have no more than twenty pages in a box. If you are dealing with old paper you may want to limit the number of sheets in a folder to only one or two. A standard rule-of-thumb is you should have enough files in this box so that if you pull a folder out it will stand up like this.

Legal size folders are better because some of the materials you have will be legal size and it is better not to fold the items or have to separate your files by size.

Try to be realistic on the amount of conservation you should have. This is generally determined by space, staff, and money available.

STORAGE METHODS TO PRESERVE MATERIALS

If you want to see the damage light can do, run off several pages of ditto and place it in a window for two weeks. At the end of that time you can see the amount of fading between the top page and the fifth or sixth page.

You could also go to a library where they have a window next to a shelf; look for a large book next to a small book and look at the amount of fading you have on the cover of the smaller book.

Not just sunlight, but regular light in a room can cause fading. If you work in a room with a lot of bright light, cover up materials when you are not working on them.

TEMPERATURE AND HUMIDITY

Try to work in an environment where the temperature doesn't vary more than 5° a year. With books 60 to 65° is a good temperatue. In Canada they vary the temperature gradually over the year. 50° humidity is a good range.

I called several historical societies a few days ago and asked about film because film is not my area. The answers I got were amazing; be careful when someone gives you an answer because there is a difference between an answer and the answer. Answers varied from 45% to 75% humidity. Most of the places said they kept film at 50°, ideally you can keep it at freezing but if you are going to warm it up you have to do so very gradually. The ideal for film is 30° and between 25 and 30% humidity. If humidity is to low you have static and if it's to high you have fungus and mold problems.

MOUNTING SCRAPBOOKS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

If you want the original in your scrapbook, you might want to do a little slit in the page and insert the item like this. Don't use glue or tape. Glue frequently cracks and tape will yellow and loose its ability to hold.

You may find it better to copy the original, store it elsewhere, and place the copy in the scrapbook; the copy can be attached with a wheat paste which you purchase from a chinese grocery store.

If you mount photos, use an acid-free mat board. Mount the photo with linen hinges, then place another acid-free mat board with cut-out over the photo. If you want to totally protect the design you then place acid-free tissue paper over the photo.

DEACIDIFICATION METHODS AND ADVANCEMENTS

Deacidification practices are presently costly. The current life of a book is twenty-five years but the life can be extended over 100 years if you use a deacidification process. Until publishers publish on paper with a different alum-resin quality you can continue to expect a short life for any books you purchase.

Five years ago it cost an average of $75 an item to extend the life of materials. Early methods, such as the use of a pressure cooker, could only be applied to a few items at a time.

During the fall of 1982 the Library of Congress and NASA developed a joint project which consisted of using diethyl zinc (DEZ) on 5,000 books inside of a NASA vacuum chamber. DEZ is a chemical vapor which neutralizes acids' destructive quality of the paper. Present practices are still extremely expensive.

The University of Washington Libraries contacted Boeing to see if their chamber would be available in case we ever had any flood damage; they gave us a figure of $1,000 a day.

SLIDES AVAILABLE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Besides the standard production photos we also have slides of our theatres in various stages of the building process.

Handout provided to those attending

Sources of information for researching theatre departments include the following formats:

Yearbooks
Newspapers: campus, local, and state
Individuals: emeritus faculty, staff, local historians
Interviews: taped or first-hand
Programs or playbills
Daybooks
promptbooks
sound effect tapes
videotapes
M.F.A. design projects
posters
scrapbooks
publicity releases
fliers and brochures
box office income reports
box office statistics (including price, % of capacity, number of performances)
ledger of purchased materials and supplies
mailing lists of patrons
mailing lists of local media
housemanager's reports
stagemanager's reports
ushers' reports
display case exhibits
promptbooks (including detailed floorplans, light plots, designs, cues and blocking)
summaries of theatre buildings and departmental history
Financial records: both academic and production
Curriculum changes
Faculty minutes
Departmental forms
Departmental correspondence
Photographs
Rare book collections: original editions
Manuscripts: especially memoirs and commissioned works
University retention centers, e.g., Records, Archives
Departmental and university libraries
Libraries of individuals
faculty activity inventories
faculty biographies
dissertations
alumni newsletters
Drama clubs
student files
employee files
memorabilia
videotape
architectural drawings
3-D models
grafatti

Handout
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SOURCES OF HISTORICAL INFORMATION ON CAMPUS ACTIVITY:

retiring faculty
departmental records
individuals or organizations from the community

ACCESS TO THE MATERIAL INCLUDES TECHNIQUES SUCH AS:

indexing
cataloging
identifying by individual or subject area

METHODS OF CATALOGING:

traditional cataloging, i.e., Library of Congress
Richard Berner's method

HANDLING OF MATERIALS ONCE THEY ARE ACCESSED:

traditional approaches include vertical files and folders

current preservation practices include:
acid free: files, folders, paper, boxes
deacidification: individually or in mass

libraries lobby for preventative approaches such as:
pressuring publishers to publish on acid free paper
copy machines which supply acid free paper

use of the following utensils:
HB or 2H pencils
non-corrosive staples
wheat paste rather than scotch tape or glue

Some techniques available for maintaining scrapbooks include:
use acid free paper
copy the original item on acid free paper
place the original item in a separate acid free box
attach the copy by wheat paste or by slits in the scrapbook's paper
tip programs in rather than glue large portions

include such items as telegrams, clippings, programs, etc.
date the item and identify its source

Remember deacidification is useless if the paper is already brittle.

LOCATIONS WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON FOR THEATRE RESEARCH:

The School of Drama: Academic Office retains the following records:

- Faculty minutes
- Alumni Newsletter
- Biographies of the faculty
- Curriculum additions and changes
- Student files: classes, essays, recommendations, resumes, evaluations, etc.
- Employee files (retained three to four years)
- Correspondence: letters critical of productions (kept indefinitely if business related)

Treatment: in vertical files and boxes

Future plans are to place scholarship and financial aid information, and statistics on the computer.

The School of Drama: Production Office retains the following items:

- Correspondence on royalties and catalogues for agents with whom the department has dealt
- programs
- scrapbook of newspaper clippings
- photos (in folders in vertical files)
- posters
- programs (Program file begun in 1978 is in a 3-ring binder: prior items are loose)
- publicity releases
- fliers and brochures
- box office income reports (now centralized)
- box office statistics: tickets sold, % of seating capacity, ticket prices, comps, number of performances, unsold tickets
- ledger of purchasing of materials and supplies
- overview of historical material on the theatres
- mailing list of patrons (shared with local theatres)
- mailing list of local media
- payroll information
- housemanagers reports
- stage managers reports
- ushers reports
- display cases
- tour requests: groups touring the theatres are arranged with a graduate student as tour guide
- matinee performances and study guides (grant Wa Humanities)
- ticket stubs for auditor (2 yr)

Handled: stored in vertical files and boxes.

Current plans to enter production history into the computer.

THE FOLLOWING DEPARTMENTS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON LIBRARIES SYSTEM HAVE THEATRICAL INFORMATION:

The Drama Library retains:
- promptbooks 1975--
- clippings
- list of the productions
- sound effect tapes
- M.F.A. design projects

The Manuscript Division retains:
- papers of regional interest acquired from individuals not directly associated with the university
- departmental promptbooks 1935-1974

The Records Division retains:
- transcient records deemed of limited value, which are destroyed after a certain number of years
- the state provides a retention schedule for budget items most of the information listed is still retained by the School of Drama

The Archives Division is a primary storage source for items destined for long-term retention. Their acquisitions include the following items:
- departmental correspondence
- permanent retention of public records
- public records of the university and university faculty
- personal papers of university faculty

Format:
- all photos older than 10 years (includes production, lobby shots, building exteriors, including those no longer extant)
  (production shots are currently mounted and free; oversize photos 14x17 are currently stored horizontally)
- programs (1 missing) are arranged alph. and color coded by theatre (blue -Boat; Cherry -Penthouse chairs; brown-Playhouse; repeated shows are stored in the same file
- posters (incomplete)
- scrapbooks (1922-1965 vary in detail)
- curriculum files
- news releases
- Conway set designs: drawings
- Conway glass slides: projections (12 boxes)
- scripts from play services
- Arena scrapbook (Drama Club)

Withdraw: routine correspondence
- books are transferred to the library system

CNI files, which include both public and private records, provide the following sources of information under the listing "W.U. -Drama School"

information on playhouse
publicity manager
touring theatre (c1950s)
touring theatre, company manager
touring theatre, Seattle Jr. Programs
Dramatic Art Dept. (pre-1940's) presidents office inventory
President's office papers: correspondence with Glenn Hughes

Staff knowledge provides information appearing in:

The newspapers, i.e., Daily and earlier (Pacific Wave 1894)
The yearbook, Tyee, lists program and photos of "all university cast" productions
ASUW papers and Padelford Papers have programs in their ephemeral files have
W.U. President: papers "Eng-Drama 1922-37" info on program, correspondence, statistics, financial statements

staff knowledge of single letters referring to Dramatic activities prior to establishment of formal classes
Washington Athletic Club performances with the Penthouse Players

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Free Technical Bulletins

Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI) Technical Bulletins
available from:
Canadian Conservation Institute
National Museums of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0M8

These bulletins include the following series:
1. Relative Humidity: Its Impotance Measurement and Control in Museums by K.J. Macleod.

2. Museum Lighting by K. J. Macleod.

3. Recommended Environmental Monitors for Museums, Archives and Art Galleries by Raymond H. Lafontaine.

4. Care of Musical Instruments in Canadian Collections by R. L. Barclay.

5. Environmental Norms for Canadian Museums, Art Galleries and Archives by Raymond H. Lafontaine.

6. The Care of Black-and White Photographic Collections: Identification of Processes by Siegfried Rempel.

7. Fluorescent Lamps by Raymond H. Lafontaine and Patricia A. Wood.

8. The Care of Wooden Objects by R. Barclay, R. Eames and A. Todd.

9. The Care of Black-and White Photographic Collections: Cleaning and Stabilization by Siegfried Rempel.

Preservation Leaflets published by the Library of Congress are available from:
Chief, Preservation Office
Research Services
Library of Congress
Washington, D.C. 20540

This series includes the following:
1. Selected References in the Literature of Conservation.

2. Environmental Protection of Books and Related Materials.

3. Preserving Leather Bookbindings.

4. Marking Manuscripts.

5. Preserving Newspapers and Newspaper-Type Materials.

Conservation Supplier

One of the oldest suppliers in the field, who is expensive, but has the widest selection is:

The Hollinger Corporation
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P. O. Box 6185
Arlington, VA 22206

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SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF RECENT BASIC PRESERVATION READINGS

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